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#56984

August 7, 2000

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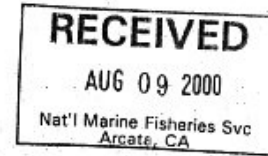
RE: **NEPA Scoping Comments on Simpson Timber Company
Incidental Take Permit and Enhancement of Survival Permit for
Del Norte and Humboldt Counties**

Enclosed, please find our comments on the scope and contents of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be prepared in relation to the Simpson Timber Co.'s proposed application for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Enhancement of Survival Permit (ESP), as per the notice in the July 11, 2000, Federal Register (65;133).

American Lands is governed by and represents citizens from across the United States who seek to protect and restore our forests, watersheds, and biotic resources for the benefit of future generations. American Lands' Forest Biodiversity Program is dedicated to promoting improved biodiversity conservation and resource management on non-Federal forestlands in the west, including through incentives and more effective policy implementation.

Where the following comments refer to Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and/or Incidental Take Permits (ITPs), they should generally be understood to also refer to Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCAs) and/or Enhancement of Survival Permits (ESPs).

Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment. Our apologies for any redundancies in the following comments and suggestions; we only recently learned of the opportunity for public comment, and have had little time to prepare these comments.



**American Lands
ALLIANCE**

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I. Overarching Issues

Depending on how the policy standards for CCAs/ESPs are interpreted, those standards might provide the covered species with a lesser chance of recovery than when the standards for HCPs/ITPs are properly implemented. It is not clear, for example, whether CCAs must minimize and mitigate the impacts of "take" to the maximum extent practicable, as is required for HCPs, nor is it clear whether CCAs are required to provide measures sufficient to amount to species' recovery, as is also required by the ESA for HCPs/ITPs.

To guard against the possibility that Simpson is proposing to use a CCA/ESP to avoid meeting important (though often insufficient) HCP standards, Simpson's proposed CCA/ESP should be explicitly required to meet all policy standards required for HCPs/ITPs, including those listed in Section III of our comments. Failure to do so might allow Simpson to circumvent the requirements for covering unlisted species in an HCP, including the overarching, Congressionally-mandated requirement that those species be addressed as if they were already listed. (It should also be noted that while it may be beneficial to address unlisted species in an HCP, the species should not be included in the ITP *per se* until such time as the species are listed and other requisites are met, as discussed in Section III of our comments.)

Moreover, the EIS should fully assess the impacts of any differences in the policy standards for HCPs/ITPs and CCAs/ESPs, any subsequent gaps between Simpson's proposed CCA conservation measures and those measures that would be required of an HCP, and any subsequent impacts to the unlisted species' chances of recovery.

The proposed actions' impacts on the covered species' existing and likely-to-be-designated critical habitats must also be carefully examined, since the proposed HCP/ITP (or CCA/ESP) may not be legally issued if it adversely modifies the species' critical habitats, as per ESA s. 7(a)(2). The logging, site preparation, roading, chemical applications, other operations likely to be permitted by the HCP/ITP and CCA/ESP are likely to adversely modify and seriously impact critical habitat for several of the covered listed species, as discussed in Section III of our comments below.

II. Basic Goals and Standards for the EIS

The EIS should meet each of the following goals and standards.

Alternatives Analysis

Under NEPA, an EIS must "rigorously explore and objectively examine all reasonable alternatives." [40 CFR 1502.14(a).]

Under NEPA, where economic preferences are used to select the preferred alternative, the decision must not be based on misleading, biased, or incomplete economic information. [*Seattle Audubon v. Lyons* (871 F. Supp. 1291, 1324 (W.D. Wash. 1994), aff'd 80 F.3d 1401 (9th Cir. 1996), as cited in Arum (1998)]

The existence of a "viable but unexamined alternative renders an environmental impact statement inadequate." [*Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism v. Morrison* (67 F.3d 723, 729 (9th Cir. 1995), as cited in Arum (1998)] Likewise, an agency may not "consider only those alternatives with [the same] end result." [*Resources Ltd. v. Robertson* (35 F.3d 1300, 1307 (9th Cir. 1994), as cited in Arum (1998)]

The EIS must analyze in detail, and evaluate the comparative merits of, a range of several different alternatives for protecting old growth, late seral and riparian ecosystems and species dependent on such ecosystems. All alternatives selected for detailed analysis must *avoid or substantially reduce* the significant environmental impacts of the proposed project. (40 C.F.R. § 1502.14; 14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15126(d).) Thus, a "straw man" alternative which authorizes more timber harvesting than the HCP will not satisfy the agencies' obligations under NEPA and CEQA. The alternatives analysis also should not be constrained by what the applicant deems economically "practicable" or "feasible." (See HCP Handbook, p. 3-35.)

The "no action" alternative must accurately describe baseline conditions and assume full compliance with and enforcement of existing federal and state laws. A no action alternative that assumes minimal or compliance with or enforcement of the ESA, and therefore seriously overestimates the purported "benefits" of the HCP's mitigation program, is not acceptable. The no action alternative must account for the likelihood that currently imperiled species will be listed in the future and subject to ESA restrictions.

At a minimum, the following alternatives should be identified and fully studied:

- 1) A credible "no action" alternative that assumes full "take" avoidance, including in compliance with ESA rules that are consonant with the covered species' recovery needs, such as is required of ESA s. 4(d) rules. Such an alternative would recognize Simpson's responsibility to protect what little habitat remains for endangered species within the context of its much larger ownership, and the fact that Simpson has already profited substantially by harming imperiled species and their habitats.
- 2) A recovery-oriented HCP that fully meets all goals and standards for HCPs/ITPs, as discussed in Section III of our comments. Among other things, such an alternative would use longer timber rotations, habitat reserves, and site protections to provide both habitat for sensitive species and reasonable income for the landowner. Forests managed for older, more diverse timber stands can provide competitive revenues from higher-quality, higher-priced timber, edible mushrooms, harvest of medicinal plants, clean water, sequestration of atmospheric carbon, and other non-timber forest products and ecosystem services. Timber companies with publicly-owned stocks that are concerned about leveraged takeovers that

may result from restoring their timber inventories may dedicate conservation easements to restrict timber harvests to sustainable levels.

3) Simpson's proposed HCP/ITP and CCA/ESP.

4) In conjunction with each of the preceding alternatives, funding for habitat restoration measures to be secured from other major California timberland owners who have benefitted financially from industrial forestry and the degradation of salmonid habitat. Such funding would be in addition to funding from Simpson and any other sources.

Impacts Analysis – Independent Analysis

The Services must take a "hard look" at the environmental consequences of approving an action, i.e., an ITP/HCP. [*Kleppe v. Sierra*, 427 U.S. 390, 410 n.21 (1976).]

The EIS must independently evaluate the effectiveness of all HCP components and outcomes. To date, most NEPA documents for forest HCPs simply reiterate the rationale for the plan found in the HCP (which is usually drafted by the landowner's consultant), and do not provide any additional, objective information. Some HCPs even use the same document as both the HCP and the NEPA analysis. An EIS that simply paraphrases or otherwise reiterates the discussion in the HCP, or is artificially constrained by the assumptions and conclusions in the HCP, will be insufficient to meet the agencies' obligations under NEPA.

Contractors for NEPA documents need to be selected by the Services. Moreover, the contractors should not have a financial or other interest in the outcome of the project. [See section 1506.5(c) of the NEPA regulations.] The HCP Handbook also states that the Services are responsible for drafting the NEPA document. [USFWS *et al* (1996), p. 2-4.] The EA or EIS should be developed by an objective third party, i.e., either a NMFS or USFWS office separate from the office which is negotiating the ITP with the landowner, or a consultant other than the consultant hired by the landowner to develop the HCP or other major projects for the landowner.

Independent (and presumably, academic) scientific peer review panels should be consulted during HCP development, particularly for more significant plans. [Kareiva *et al* (1999)]

Impacts Analysis – Basic Scope

Under NEPA, environmental impacts which must be considered include impacts to ecological, aesthetic, historical, cultural, economic, social, and health values, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. [Mueller *et al* (1997).] The HCP Handbook also states that impacts to air quality, water quality, and land use patterns should be addressed. [USFWS *et al* (1996), p. 1-6]

Impacts to all other environmental values should be assessed.

Off-reservation American Indian treaty rights must be considered, including through consultation with the relevant tribes, according to the HCP Handbook. [USFWS et al (1996), p. 3-9]

Impacts Analysis – Activities Examined

The EIS must fully assess the impacts of each forest management activity (i.e., specific types of logging operations, site preparation operations, road construction plans, specific herbicide applications, specific silvicultural regimes and resulting forest growth, etc.) permitted by the ITP and ESP on all environmental resources, including water quality, air quality, watershed and geologic impacts, land use, etc.

In order to adequately evaluate the impacts of the HCP on water quality, the EIS must include adequate baseline data which specifically describes the habitat structure and quality of all Class I, II and III streams in the HCP area. This includes stream temperature, sedimentation and turbidity, percentage of shade canopy, and the location, quality and quantity of large woody debris, spawning gravel, riffles, pools, fish spawning and rearing sites, and key forest plant and animal species. All Class I, II and III watercourse, roads, road crossings, landings and skid trails must be described and mapped. In addition, the EIS must identify the steepness, stability and erosion hazard rating of slopes, and the location of any previous slope and road failures, erosion and mass wasting incidents. The EIS also must assess and map upslope activities that would potentially deliver sediment to streams and are potential sources of slides, erosion and mass wasting.

The EIS must analyze impact of the HCP on each of these baseline parameters, including stream sedimentation, temperature and turbidity; canopy retention; recruitment of large woody debris; late seral forest characteristics of stream corridors; and wildlife and vegetative structure and diversity, both during harvest and over the long term. The EIS must examine the impact of construction and maintenance of roads, road crossings, landings and skid trails, wet weather operations, operations on steep slopes and near watercourses, and the ability of culverts to accommodate projected and unanticipated storm events.

The EIS also must evaluate the impact of timber harvesting and other activities authorized by the HCP on the ability of Class I, II and III streams in the HCP area to meet applicable basin plan limitations, water quality objectives, total maximum daily loads, and antidegradation requirements over the life of the HCP. Finally, the EIS must evaluate the adequacy of the HCP's mitigation measures, such as leave tree standards, stream buffers, canopy retention and recruitment of large woody debris to offset the adverse impacts of the HCP.

The details of HCP mitigation measures must be explicitly described and accompanied by data on their effectiveness. The likely success of each measure must be evaluated, as must the overall effectiveness of mitigation measures at minimizing and offsetting "take." [Kareiva et al (1999)]

Impacts Analysis – Species Impacts Analysis

The EIS must include a detailed biological analysis of the impacts of timber harvesting, resource extraction and other activities authorized by the HCP and ITP on *each* wildlife and plant species (whether listed or unlisted) to be "covered by" the HCP (i.e. each species for which "no surprises" regulatory assurances will be given) and all designated critical habitat areas. (HCP Handbook, pp. 3-12, 3-38, 4-4.)

Impacts to all threatened, endangered, candidate, proposed-listed, sensitive, rare, endemic, or otherwise at-risk or ecologically, socially, or economically important plant and animal species should be assessed, *regardless* of whether those species are officially "covered" by the HCP.

Impacts should be assessed explicitly for each listed and unlisted species covered by the HCP, as should the relationship between the landowner's forest management practices and each species' conservation needs, including the species' recovery needs.

In addition, the EIS must analyze the impact of activities on all species "occurring or potentially occurring" on all Simpson lands subject to the HCP, regardless of whether they will be "covered" by the HCP. If any wildlife or plant species occurring or potentially occurring on lands subject to the HCP will *not* be "covered" by the plan, the EIS must analyze the impacts of the HCP on these species, why they are not "covered," and include mitigation measures for any significant impacts identified.

The HCP Handbook notes that the Services must consider impacts on Federally-listed plants, during ESA s. 7 consultation, regardless of whether those plants are "covered" by the HCP. Plants protected by state laws are among those which must be addressed, pursuant to ESA s. 9. [USFWS et al (1996), pp. 1-6, 3-8, & 3-17]

Determinations of which species are likely to be using the property should be based primarily on field surveys. It is not safe to assume that past land management eliminated all sensitive species and their habitats, or on state species databases, which are notoriously inadequate for private lands. Determinations about species which will need habitats to be restored on the property for their recovery should consider the site's potential natural habitats, based on soils, potential vegetation, elevation, local climate, etc.

For each species, the analysis must: (1) specifically indicate how the HCP and ITP will affect species' survival *and* recovery prospects; (2) describe activities that may result in take of covered species; and (3) *quantify* the anticipated level of take resulting from all activities authorized under the HCP. (HCP Handbook, pp. 3-12 - 3-14, 3-20.) The EIS must indicate whether the impacts of the HCP and ITP on each of these species will be significant, and if so, include *species specific* mitigation measures and management actions for *each* significant

impact identified. (40 C.F.R. § 1502.16(h).) Generalized habitat based mitigation measures which do not account for individual species needs are unacceptable.

The EIS must provide: 1) detailed, thorough, and quantitative descriptions of the habitat and population conditions that will correspond to each covered species' recovery, 2) detailed, quantitative habitat and population projections for each species covered by the HCP, for each alternative, and 3) compare the alternatives' outcomes identified in step (2) with the indicators of recovery identified in step (1).

HCPs -- particularly those covering large areas or large amounts of a species' range -- should inventory, summarize, and document available data on each species and their distribution, abundance, population trends, ecological requirements, life history, and causes of endangerment. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

Quantitative estimates of the impacts of "take" on species' viability should be provided, especially for larger or more significant plans. At a minimum, best and worst-case scenarios should be identified. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

Impacts of "take" should also be evaluated, particularly for larger or more significant plans, including by determining whether the habitats being "taken" correspond to population "sources" or "sinks," whether genetically unique subpopulations are being "taken," and whether unique habitat/species combinations are being impacted. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

HCPs need to quantify the plans' biological goals. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

An HCP's adequacy is questionable if the plan fails to adequately address one or more of the following: species' status reviews, analyzing the proposed "take," assessing the impacts of "take," planning and assessing mitigation measures, and planning and assessing monitoring provisions. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

Where possible, assertions made in HCPs should be supported by quantitative information. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

The EIS likewise must objectively analyze the likely short-term *and* long-term effectiveness of each of the HCP's proposed measures to minimize and mitigate incidental take of covered species and provide a scientifically justifiable reason why and how these measures will mitigate any significant adverse impacts to species to a level of insignificance. (HCP Handbook, p. 3-19.)

The analysis in the EIS must be supported by accurate and adequate baseline data (including field surveys), scientific studies, population viability analyses, and other information which provides a scientifically justifiable basis for the environmental document's conclusions. Specifically, the EIS must include comprehensive biological assessments for each covered species (and particularly listed species), and their associated habitats. Such assessments should

address such issues as species abundance and distribution, habitat requirements (e.g. important food sources and foraging habitat, and nesting, roosting and dispersal habitat), biologically important symbiotic relationships with other species, life history and population trends, both range-wide and within the plan area.

Impacts Analysis – Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative effects analyses are also required as part of the ESA s. 7 consultation process for HCPs, as per 50 CFR 402. HCPs should evaluate the cumulative impacts of multiple plans and their interactions. The percentage of local *and* global populations that will be “taken” should be assessed. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

A thorough cumulative effects analysis should be conducted to address all Federal and non-Federal actions affecting each species covered by the ITP/HCP. The analysis should also address all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions across the species' ranges.

The cumulative impacts of the HCP also must be evaluated in conjunction with the anticipated impacts on all species affected by the HCP of ESA section 4(d) rules for the covered species, the effects of public lands management activities under the Northwest Forest Plan, and the impacts of timber harvesting under the “salvage logging rider” (Pub. L. No. 104-19, section 2001 (1995)) and other relevant laws and policies. Further, the cumulative impacts analysis must also evaluate the HCP's and ITP's impact on the effectiveness of existing federal and non-federal conservation strategies over the short term and the long term.

The EIS must evaluate the cumulative impacts of timber harvesting and other land-disturbing activities on each species affected by the HCP. This cumulative effects analysis must account for the amount of incidental take of species authorized by each incidental take permit and incidental take statement that has been approved or is currently being prepared for federal and non-federal lands throughout the Pacific Northwest (e.g. California, Oregon and Washington). The analysis should also account for the possibility that landowners who have not yet applied for an incidental take permit to take existing habitat and species on private lands will do so in the future, and estimate the amount of incidental take that will be authorized by those permits in light of existing precedents.

Impacts Analysis – Institutional Issues

The EIS must objectively and independently evaluate any assertions by the HCP applicant that certain mitigation measures are “impracticable” or “infeasible.” Such assertions must be supported by reliable and specific documentation of impracticability or infeasibility. (HCP Handbook, p. 7-3.)

Activities on other lands not subject to the HCP's Implementation Agreement should be considered as speculative, and not counted as mitigation for “take” authorized by the ITP.

The EIS must analyze the adequacy of the commitments for funding the mitigation and monitoring measures in the HCP to support long term species conservation. The analysis must include financial and other data, which accounts for inflation, depreciation of assets, increased real estate values, and other contingencies, to support the conclusions reached. If the EIS concludes that the funding mechanisms are inadequate, it must propose alternate funding mechanisms which would achieve long term conservation of species for the life of the permit.

The EIS must analyze the reasonably foreseeable biological impacts of including a "no surprises" provision in the HCP and implementing agreement. The effects of the "no surprises" policy over both the short and the long term are extremely likely to be significant. Thus, if 1) the HCP fails to achieve its stated goals, 2) the HCP conditions prove inadequate to protect species, 3) new scientific information is discovered which affects the assumptions in or conclusions of the HCP, and/or 4) unanticipated circumstances significantly change the environmental baseline, then federal and state agencies may be restricted in their enforcement and ability to respond in order to conserve the species.

The EIS should evaluate the availability of federal and state funds to meet any future mitigation requirements. If the availability of federal and/or state funds is a likely possibility, then the EIS must also analyze the biological effects resulting from the permittee's and/or the government's future unwillingness or inability to provide adequate mitigation or HCP implementation funding on Fish and Wildlife Service determinations pursuant to Section 7.

The EIS should fully analyze the impacts of both foreseeable and unforeseeable changed circumstances on the assumptions, conclusions and mitigation measures contained in the HCP, and how these changed circumstances will affect species survival and recovery, population trends, habitat quality and quantity, water quality, and other environmental factors. Foreseeable circumstances include fire, flood, lightning, disease and other stochastic events. The HCP must contain mitigation measures to address such foreseeable circumstances, and specific, detailed procedures to address any unforeseen circumstances, as required by the ESA and its implementing regulations. These critical provisions cannot simply be passed off as a federal government obligation under the "no surprises" policy.

The DEIS must also consider the significant economic benefits that Simpson will likely accrue by acquiring a valid ITP for various listed and unlisted species. Particularly when coupled with "No Surprises" guarantees, the ITP provides a level of regulatory certainty which is unprecedented in the business world, largely insulates Simpson from any future liability to adopt additional conservation measures to protect and recover listed and unlisted species, and may even increase Simpson's land values, assuming that the ITP and HCP could be potentially transferred or otherwise adopted by subsequent landowners.

Information on listed species, as well as monitoring data from HCPs should be made accessible in a centralized location, to facilitate better planning and plan evaluation. [Kareiva et al (1999)]

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures should be provided for *each* significant impact under NEPA. [40 CFR 1502.16(h).]

III. Additional Suggestions for the Recovery-Oriented HCP Alternative: Additional Information for the EIS' Impact Analyses

The EIS should also include, in addition to the preferred alternative, which is likely to inadequately address key goals and standards for HCPs, an alternative which fully meets the following goals and standards for HCPs. As discussed above, CCAs should also meet all of the following goals and standards expected for HCPs.

Many of the following goals and standards are also directly relevant to the EIS' impact analyses.

Use of Best Available Science

ESA section 7(a)(2) and the Act's administrative rules require agencies to use the best available science. [16 USC 1536(a)(2).]

The HCP must address the covered species' including population levels, specific habitat conditions, specific ecosystem interactions, and other factors needed for the species' recovery.

The HCP and DEIS must assess and mitigate the impacts of all forest management activities, which may include site preparation; herbicide applications; fertilizer applications; pesticide applications; intrusion of invasive exotic plants and other species as a result of intensive logging practices; intensive short-rotation clearcut forestry practices; frequent and widespread vehicle use and human disturbance; high road densities; and other sources of impacts.

The HCP must address all influences on salmonid habitat related to the covered activities, including invertebrates and other food sources, pollution from herbicides and other chemicals, impacts of herbicides and other chemicals on upslope riparian areas and thus downslope aquatic ecosystems, the impact of upslope logging and other practices on the timing and intensity of water flows, and various other factors.

The HCP must include specific measurable and verifiable performance standards and indicators, including with regard to water temperature, sediment, chemical pollution, invertebrates and other food sources, high and low summer and winter water flows, road densities, and other factors affecting the survival and recovery of the covered species.

The NMFS regulations state that HCPs must describe the status, distribution, seasonal distribution, habitat needs, feeding habitat, and other biological requirements of affected species or stocks. [50 CFR 222.22(b)(3).]

Identification of Biological Goals for the Species

The HCP must also meet, with regard to each of the listed and unlisted species proposed to be covered by the ITP and HCP, the following standards from the Services' "Draft Addendum to the Final Handbook for Habitat Conservation Planning and Incidental Take Permitting Process." [Federal Register, 64:45, March 9, 1999.] As discussed below under Sections II-B, C, D, and E of our comments, the following biological goals must correspond to full mitigation of impacts to the species, minimization and mitigation of impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and species' recovery needs, and other basic impact minimization and mitigation standards.

"In the future, every HCP will include specific biological goals and objectives...." "The biological outcome of the operating conservation program for the covered species is the best measure of the success of an HCP." "Specific biological objectives are subsets of the biological goals and represent specific measurable targets for achieving the goals of the operating conservation program." The HCP must include specific measurable outcomes and targets, in terms of populations, reproduction, specific habitat components, specific impact levels which will be considered tolerable, etc., for most covered species.

"Although the goals and objectives may be stated in habitat terms, each covered species that falls under that goal or objective must be clearly specified."

"The biological goals and objectives should be commensurate with the specific impacts and duration of the HCP applicant's proposed action."

"Available literature, State conservation strategies, candidate conservation plans, draft or final recovery plans or outlines, and other sources of relevant scientific and commercial information can serve as guides in setting biological goals and objectives. Species experts, State wildlife agencies, recovery teams, and/or scientific advisory committees may also help develop the biological goals and objectives."

The Services' HCP Handbook states that: i) "habitat based" HCPs should use indicator species to establish forest management parameters, and ii) all endemic, sensitive, listed, proposed listed, candidate, and species of special concern should be addressed "adequately." [USFWS et al (1996), pp. 3-12, -37]

Sierra Club et al v. Bruce Babbitt et al found that current data on species' conditions and recovery needs must be used; goals included in recovery plans are not sufficient if conditions have changed since those plans were written. [Civil Action No. 97-0691-CB-C, Order August 4, 1998, S. Dist., AL, S. Div.]

Impact Assessment

The NMFS regulations state that HCPs must describe the proposed activity, including the anticipated dates, duration, and specific locations. [50 CFR 222.22(b)(4).]

The NMFS regulations state that HCPs must describe the ITP/HCP's anticipated impacts, including the amount, extent, and type of "take," as well as the anticipated impact on habitats and the likelihood of habitat restoration. [50 CFR 222.22(b)(5)(i) & (ii).]

Sierra Club et al v. Bruce Babbitt et al recently found that HCPs need to determine how many individuals of affected species will be "taken," how many individuals will remain, what the distribution of the species is throughout its remaining habitat, and how this relates to the species' minimum viable population. [Civil Action No. 97-0691-CB-C, Order August 4, 1998, S. Dist., AL, S. Div.]

Likewise, the HCP and DEIS must identify accurate baseline trends (i.e., the "No Action" alternative) which consider the likelihood that the various covered yet-unlisted would be listed in the near future, with various habitat protection measures being required *in lieu* of the HCP. Without accurate baseline trends it is impossible to determine whether the plan provides a net benefit -- or even adequate mitigation -- to the covered species over time. While the exact parameters of these improved measures may not yet be known, it would be quite simple for the HCP and DEIS to identify the likely range of enhanced policy standards that will be adopted by the USFWS, NMFS, and other relevant agencies.

Equally important, for all of the covered species, the HCP and DEIS must identify, describe, and/or quantify the "residual" impacts that the covered species will experience -- including in relation to their survival and recovery needs -- *after* the HCP's impact minimization and mitigation measures have been accounted for.

Effects on proposed listed species, federally listed plants, and critical habitat are to be considered during the ESA s. 7 consultation process. [USFWS et al (1996), p. 6-15, and 16 USC 1536(a)(2).]

ESA s 7 requires consideration of cumulative and indirect effects. [50 CFR 402.] NEPA also requires a cumulative effects analysis.

According to the HCP Handbook, the Services may not be able to approve an ITP under ESA s. 7(a)(2) unless the HCP addresses *all listed species* in the plan area. [USFWS et al (1996), p. 3-7] Presumably this includes federally listed plants, which must be considered during the ESA s. 7 consultation process.